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S E R M O N S

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A HOPEFUL YOUTH FALLING
SHORT OF HEAVEN;

EXTRACTED PARTLY FROM

DR. WATTS'S SERMONS

ON THE SAME SUBJECT:

WITH A

HYMN ANNEXED TO EACH OF THEM.

L O N D O N :

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A D V E R T I S E M E N T.

THESE Sermons are (in substance) much the same as those of Dr. Watts. The difference, and every variation will be easily discovered, by all who are acquainted with the Doctor's. These are designed for young people, more *unlimitedly* than those which were composed by the Doctor for his own society; and therefore the form in which they now are, will be admissible by every reader. The distance of more than a hundred and fifty miles from the press will apologize for any typographical errata which, perhaps, may be found in them. Should these Sermons be acceptable to the Patrons of Sunday Schools, or any other Institutions for Promoting Christianity, and through their hands disseminated amongst the poor, it will add to the pleasure of the person who now introduces them to the public, with the best wishes that they may not be introduced unsuccessfully for the interest of morality and religion.

A N O N Y M O U S.

S E R M O N I.

A HOPEFUL YOUTH FALLING SHORT OF HEAVEN.

MARK X. 21.

THEN JESUS BEHOLDING HIM, LOVED HIM.

IF we would know the person who was thus personally favoured with the love of Jesus, and be acquainted with his character, it is necessary that we should read the whole account which we have of him in this chapter, from the 17th to the 23d verse. We read it thus: And when he was gone forth into the way, there came one running who kneeled before him, and asked him, Good Master, What shall I do that I may inherit eternal life? And Jesus said unto him, Why callest thou me good, there is none *good*, save one, that is, God. Thou knowest the Commandments: Do not commit adultery, do not kill, do not steal, do not bear false witness, defraud not, honour thy father and mother. And he answered and said

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unto

unto him, Master, all these have I observed from my youth. Then Jesus beholding him, loved him, and said unto him, one thing thou lackest, go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in Heaven; and come take up thy cross and follow me.—And he was *sad* at that saying, and went away grieved, for he had *great possessions*.—And Jesus looked round about, and saith unto his disciples, How hardly shall they who have RICHES enter into the kingdom of God.—If we read the account which the other Evangelists give of this transaction, we shall find that this person was a *young man*, and a ruler among the Jews.—He had some concern upon his mind about his future state, and came to Christ (a sacred Prophet) to enquire the way to Heaven: but he evidently had a vain conceit of his own righteousness, and an excessive love of money.—He would have been an heir of heaven, but not in *competition* with his *inheritance* on earth. He desired the love of God, but would enjoy and love this world immoderately too, and rather than renounce the pleasant things of this life, which he amazingly valued, he would quit his pretences to a life to come.—He went away grieved, and full of sadness, because of the advice which our Saviour gave him.—He forsook Christ and Heaven, having *great possessions* on earth.—It is not to our purpose to know, whether in the following years of his life he was brought to repentance and salvation, though it is most likely that he was not, for as he loved his money and his estate so well

well when young, that vice, very probably, increased with his age. Besides, he stands in the history of the gospel as an example of those men who *lose Heaven* for the *love of money*.—From the text in this point of view, and the result of all which past in conversation between Christ and the young man, we learn this doctrine. Our Saviour expressed a sort of love for a person who preferred this world to heaven, and neglected his own salvation.—In order to improve this idea, we shall consider what is meant by the love of our Saviour to this young man, and to persons of his character. What there was in him, as the probable cause, which so attracted our Saviour's love. What remarks may be made upon the sin and folly of a person so lovely and so beloved of Christ. An address shall be proposed to three sorts of persons, and applied to them from observations on the character of the young person mentioned in this text.

First, What is meant by the love of our Saviour to this young man, and to persons of his character. *His love* to this young man was undoubtedly *humane love*, for there were some peculiar qualities in this youth which were suited to attract the love of human nature; such qualities as a wise and perfect man could not but love: it was probably a love of the same kind, as that which our Lord expressed for the apostle John, who was distinguished from the rest as *the disciple whom Jesus loved*.

The love of Christ to this young man in this view, implied several things.

1st. *A hearty approbation of those good qualities which he beheld in him.*

2dly. *A complacency in his person*, a sort of human delight in a fellow-creature who had several good qualities, though the love of God, and vital religion, were wanting in him. So I may be pleased with the learned conversation of a knowing and well-tempered man, though he may be my enemy, and in his heart an enemy to God too: of such a temper was this young man, he idolized gold by his strong attachment to it, and therefore was an enemy to God*, but for his external amiableness, and other good qualities, Jesus loved him.

3dly. *Some natural good wishes for his welfare* are implied in this love. There is in every wise and good man a hearty desire of the happiness of his own species; he loves all in this sense, even the foolish and the wicked. Human Nature (which has any goodness in it) is ready to wish well to any person, though unseen, unknown, and an utter stranger; especially if he has some pleasing qualities in him. There may be an innocent inclination to see all men everlastingly happy, though we know this will not be; for the word of God declares, that the greatest part of

* See James iv. 4.

men walk in the *broad way*, and shall go down to hell. You know how vehemently St. Paul longed for the salvation of all his countrymen, the Jews. This we call a *love of benevolence*, and it is evident, by the following particulars, that the Lord expressed a love *of this kind* to the young man mentioned in our text.

4th. *A conferring of actual benefit or kindness* is implied in the love of *Christ* to this youth. He stood still and entertained him with friendly conversation; he endeavoured, with propriety, to shew him his danger; he directed him to obtain treasure in heaven. He called him to be his disciple, and gave him a promise of everlasting riches, if he would have complied with his proposal. This sort of love our *Lord Jesus* frequently shewed, even to those whom he did not savingly convert by his gospel; for it was his character, that he went about doing good, when his doctrine was but **PARTIALLY** received.

5thly. This love of Christ includes compassion for the young man, and some degree of sorrow. A view of his case touched our Lord with pity. It appeared to give him concern, that he, who for some worthy deeds was to be admired, should at the same time disregard what would make him perfectly good, and be so hardened in selfish confidence, so puffed up with a conceit of his own merit, and so tenacious of an opinion that he had kept all the Commandments

of God when he was about to reject the Saviour and the salvation of his own soul. In these circumstances Jesus pitied him with the same kind of pity (we have reason to suppose) which he expressed over Jerusalem, when he exclaimed and said, O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, who killest the prophets and stonest them who are sent unto thee. How often would I have gathered thy children, as a hen doth her brood under her wings, and ye would not!—Jesus mingled tears of love and sorrow over that unhappy city; for Luke tells us, that he beheld the city and wept over it, and spake in this moving language, if thou hadst known, even thou, in this thy day, the things which belong to thy peace, but now they are hid from thine eyes. Let a noble palace be destroyed; let any thing curious be injured and we shall feel the disaster; but there is no comparison between what we feel upon such occasions, and the feelings we have at an event of death amongst those whom we regard. Pity becomes the good and the wise at the loss of a member of society who is endeared to them by amiable accomplishments. Such pity became the Saviour, when he saw a young man who had some pleasing endowments, yet obstinately going on in the way to irrecoverable ruin.

What was there in this young man as the probable cause, which so attracted our Saviour's love? This is our consideration,

II. Which will allow us to have a variety of ideas of him.

1st. Probably his person was pleasing, as it was beautified with the bloom of youth, for he is called a YOUNG MAN. His fair countenance (for probably it was so) might express an engaging sensibility, because it is said, Then Jesus beholding him, loved him. When he saw him and reflected upon his circumstances, he was induced to pity so lovely a *youth*, who was enslaved to riches, and fatally bound, though in fetters of gold.

2dly. He had a courteous and very obliging manner, which appeared in several examples; he kneeled before our Lord, and approached him with great respect; he venerated his character, and called him *good Master!* and our Lord seemed to approve of his salutation, though he said there is none good but God.—By his whole deportment we find him a person of great civility; he knew how to pay the honours of his country well, to give titles to whom titles were due, and to do those things *gracefully*. A courteous, humble, and decent behaviour, without affectation or flattery, is so far from being reprov'd by Jesus Christ, that not only in this example our Lord seems pleas'd with it, but in many examples, which we have in the New Testament, it is recommended, so as to make christianity *even in this respect* AMIABLE. It is pleasing to mankind, and can-

not but gain love and esteem from all wise and virtuous people.

3dly, He was religiously educated: he was young when he came to our Lord, and yet said of the Commandments of moral duty, I have kept them all from my youth. There is reason to be of opinion that his parents were good people, who brought him up in habits of religion and virtuous morals. Those happy advantages might add to the regard which Jesus Christ shewed to him. Virtue alone will command respect even from the vile and the wicked; much more from the good and the pious, who will always take delight in paying honour to it. There is great amiableness in sobriety, temperance, charity, justice, truth and sincerity, though they may not proceed from a principle of *pure love* to God.

4thly, He had a concern for the future happiness of his soul, and he appeared diligent in enquiring after the means by which he might obtain *eternal life*. He came running with haste to ask this question of great importance, What shall I do to inherit eternal life? He saw the heavenly state, and desired it. He perceived the state of hell, and dreaded it. He came not to our Lord, as the Sadducees did, to ask curious and ensnaring questions, but he appeared to come with an honest design, to know the way to heaven, and he went away sorrowful when he understood that he could not come into
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it but by regarding it *more* than his *wealth*.— Though he had known, and (as he thought) made some tolerable proficiency in the leading principles of goodness, yet he was heartily willing to receive instruction. *What lack I yet?* We are ready to love those who are of a teachable disposition, and inclined to learn what may be of advantage to them; and for the same reason we may conclude, that our Saviour loved this young man.

5thly. He was not in an ill state of health, nor discontented, so as to be out of humour with the world, nor in a private situation without the gratifications of honour, but he was a ruler, high in rank and authority; and therefore his case was rare: and he might, on account of his circumstances, be lovely even in the sight of him who never appeared PARTIALLY delighted with the rich and the great. But unhappy youth, he went away sorrowful from the Saviour because he had large possessions, and could not endure to part with them.

What remarks may be made upon the sin and folly of a person so lovely and so beloved of Christ.—This is our

III. Consideration.

1st. Remark, how much good and evil may be mingled in the same person. What good qualities had this youth, and at the same time
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a carnal mind, which was in love with, and immoderately attached to this world. How has a sinful propensity debased our nature, which was once a glorious composition of all that was good. How low are we fallen from primitive innocence and glory, and yet how hath sovereign grace prevented us from total ruin, and put into our hands the means of our recovery.

Let us survey the world, and see what a mixture of amiable and unamiable qualities are in many persons. There is beauty, vivacity, good humour, and compassion in those who are profligate and abandoned to many vices. There is love, sobriety, honesty, and decency in those who do not savingly know God, nor with piety believe the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. Perhaps there are none of our race who have not many good qualities, either by nature, or acquired by industry, and therefore it is necessary, when we observe the vices of men, to regard their virtues too, or we shall not follow the example of our Saviour which is laid before us in the case of this young man. How severely should our own behaviour reprove us when we give way to our *ill* nature, and let our lips injure the characters of our neighbours without restraint, and without allowing that, though they *have vices, they have virtues too, which are much to their credit.* What a torrent of detraction has often flowed, all over a town or a country, from the foul mouths of contending

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ing parties, without any cause but the *partial* prejudices of those who have been intoxicated with rage and disappointment in supporting some doubtful opinions either in religion or politics. Let us review our conduct, and blush at our impiety, if we have ever contracted the guilt of such crimes.

Second remark. Persons who cannot be esteemed for religion, may and ought to be the objects of our regard when we have the *greatest* love for PIETY, for we see the love of Christ expressed to a youth who had a *covetous heart*, and who *preferred earth to heaven*.

Let all christians read the words and receive the spirit of their Saviour who hath given them these precepts *. "We have heard that it hath been said, thou shalt love thy neighbour and hate thine enemy. But *I* say unto you, love your enemies, bless them who curse you, do good to them who hate you, and pray for them who despitefully use you and persecute you, that ye may be the children of your Father who is in heaven; for he maketh his sun to rise on the *evil* and on the *good*, and sendeth *rain* on the *just* and on the *unjust*."

Third Remark. As a christian, I am to love those who are but partially good, and for whom (in the vulgar sense) I have no charity.

* Matth. v. 43, &c.

Were not this a general rule, how could good parents fulfil their duty of affection to their wicked children; or good children pay due respect to wicked parents. How can we be FOLLOWERS OF GOD, as dear children, if we are not *kind* to the *unthankful* and to the *evil**.

Fourth Remark. Many desirable accomplishments united, will not introduce those into heaven who are but partially good. Persons who have the finest compositions to distinguish them, of beauty and youth, embellished with many habits of virtue, will not by those means obtain eternal life. He who prefers earth to heaven, and loves the possessions of this world above a pious rectitude of heart abides in a state of condemnation and death. PIETY is more than *perfect virtue*, and cannot be in the heart where virtue is not. Piety raises the soul above virtue to a regard for goodness and universal rectitude, for the sake of God, and for the glory of religion, as the divine Being hath revealed it; and perhaps there in this exalted sense alone, piety, *in principle differs from virtue*.

It is possible for a person to labour some time for this piety of heart, (which we have mentioned) yet not successfully; strait is the gate and narrow is the way which leads to life, and few there be who find it †, and he who *strives*

* Luke vi. 37.

† Matth. vii. 14.

is not crowned, except he strive *lawfully* *. Thus did not the rich young man strive, he endeavoured to obtain eternal life, but not with all his soul. He would not take up his cross and follow Christ. He loved heaven *well*, but he loved his possessions *better*, and therefore was incapable of receiving true piety and its consequent blessings.

The eyes of God are penetrating; they perfectly discover the latent vices of the mind, though veiled with many pleasing virtues. We may evade the sight of human eyes, even the sight of our own eyes, if we have a fond opinion of our own goodness, and *think more highly of ourselves than we ought to think*, but the great God can never be imposed upon at this rate. Where an immoderate love of this world prevails in the heart, it overturns a thousand good qualities which are pleasing and not without value; for every virtue undoubtedly will have some adequate reward from him who will render to every man according to his deeds †; yet we have authority to say, that if any man love this world *chiefly*, the *love of the Father* is not in him ‡.

Wise and happy is that soul who fears to build his hope of heaven upon the sand, a fair (perhaps) but feeble foundation. Wise and happy is he who does not mistake *partial* for

* 2 Tim. ii. 5. † Rom. ii. 6. ‡ 1 John ii. 15.

universal goodness. While others, who pretend to *superior wisdom*, raise their ill-expectations of future happiness upon a *few worthy deeds*, or devout *wishes*; this person proceeds upon a better principle; he is satisfied only with a heart altogether devoted to his God, and he will acquire the glory which he had in view. When others, in the great day of decision, meet with shame and terrifying disappointment, he shall be applauded before the thousands of holy angels as *the truly wise man*, and shall find himself *for ever happy*.

Fifth Remark. How dangerous are the snares of riches. *Imperceptibly* they become *violent temptations* (even to persons *well-inclined*) to bind their souls fast to this world, and to induce them to neglect God, and Christ, and heaven. This was the case of the young man mentioned in our text; he went away from our Lord disappointed and grieved because he could not join the means of salvation, and *his* love of the world together, and therefore he refused the proposals which Christ made to him.—*Impressed* with this *astonishing case*, we have reason to believe our Lord exclaimed, *How hardly shall they who have riches enter into the kingdom of God?* because (as he explains himself) it is so hard for those who *possess great riches*, not to love them *too well*, and trust in them as their *chief good*.

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This young man was not *far* from the kingdom of God, yet at a *fatal* distance. A wretched chain (though a golden one) withheld his soul from the advice of his Saviour. He was young, he was modest, and humble. He had a desire to be saved; he had been obedient to many precepts of the sacred law: all these, said he, have I kept from my youth. He was almost a Christian, but his riches prevented him from being altogether so. Fatal wealth, and foolish possessor!

It became our blessed Lord, who was the Heir of all things, to divest himself of *heavenly wealth* and *grandeur* when he came to introduce into the world a religion, so spiritual and so refined as the gospel was; and it became him to put such a *test* as this to all who should desire to be his disciples, whether they durst venture to exchange the present world, and the visible enjoyments of it, for blessings and glories future and invisible. But the test proved too severe for this young man, and perhaps that many would think it too severe were it put to them now.

With great reason did the apostle Paul lay an injunction on the *young preacher, Timothy, to charge them who are rich in this world not to TRUST in uncertain riches, but to do good to the poor, and distribute to the needy, in order to lay up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, because men are too apt to confide*

confide in a plenty of gold as a durable comfort, forgetting the time when they will be *wretched, and miserable, and poor, &c.* if they have not some more lasting treasure.

With the best views did he admonish them to lay hold on eternal life, because, through a *sordidness* of heart, many *fall into temptations and snares, into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in perdition.* For the love of money is the *root of all evil; which, while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith (of the gospel) and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.*

Let us take occasion here to put the rich, of every rank, in mind of their danger; intreating them to watch against the shining allurements which beset them around. Beware, O ye rich, lest your eyes be dazzled with the glitter of this world, and ye be blinded to the *precepts and spirit of religion.*

Shall we not comfort the poor by pointing to their privileges, and telling them how much more safe they are by being out of the way of those golden snares. They have been used to poverty and the circumstances of their station, and therefore it is more to be hoped that the plainness and pure simplicity of the gospel will not offend them. In the days of Christ, the poor, remarkably, received the gospel; and not many rich, not many noble, not many mighty have

have, in any age, been the humble followers of the Saviour.

May the rich, in every assembly, be influenced by divine goodness, to be superior to all their peculiar temptations, and ready to receive the precepts of their Lord. May they emulate the poor in this respect, and be ready to unite with them in encouraging goodness and piety, till they are at the end of their days united to the glorious assembly above, and made possessors of everlasting riches! Amen.

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H Y M N.

I.

MUST flow'ry Charms of Nature then,
 So hopeless of Salvation prove;
 Can *latent Vice* so sure condemn,
 The Man whom *Jesus* deigns to love.

II.

The Man who fought the Ways of Truth,
 Paid Friends and Neighbours all their Due
 (A modest, sober, lovely Youth)
 Who thought he wanted nothing now.

III.

But mark the Cause: Thus spake the Lord,
Come part with Earth for Heaven to-day;
 The Youth astonish'd at the Word,
 In silent Sadness went away.

IV.

In vain the Charms of Nature shine;
 If *sordid Passions* govern me,
 Transform my Soul, O *Love divine*,
 And make me part with all for thee.

S E R M O N II.

A HOPEFUL YOUTH FALLING SHORT OF HEAVEN.

MARK X. 21.

THEN JESUS BEHOLDING HIM, LOVED HIM.

WHEN our Saviour dwelt upon the earth, he met with a young man in the coast of Judea, who preferred the riches of this world to all the treasures of heaven; and yet, when he beheld him, he loved him. We have considered what there was in him as the probable cause which so attracted our Saviour's love, and what remarks may be made upon the sin and folly of a person so lovely and so beloved of Christ.

An address shall be proposed to three sorts of persons, and applied to them from observations on the character of the young person who is mentioned in our text, with a conclusion of this subject.

I. Those

I. Those who possess some good qualities, but through the dominion which vicious habits have over them are kept from the love of God.

II. Those who are reformed (in some measure) so as not to love the world immoderately, but who are culpable for an unamiable temper.

III. Those who have every good quality.

I. We shall address those who possess some good qualities, but through the dominion which vicious habits have over them, are kept from the love of God, and the way to heaven.

1st. Those who are endowed, by nature, with some excellencies of body or mind; you who are young, beautiful, and sprightly, but without *a supreme love* for God and *religion*, which guards you from vicious and wicked habits, while I behold you, I would lament your case with much compassion. What great pity it is that the bloom of your youth should only sooth your vanity, and promote in you the various guilty passions of pride and evil. Your bloom and beauty will soon wither, if they are not preserved by a goodness of heart. Quickness of parts, and unrestrained appetites, have impelled many, at your time of life, to indulge themselves in irregular pleasures, which have brought on an untimely decay of constitution, pains of body, and afflictions of mind, with a
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sad prospect of irrecoverable ruin. We have reason, therefore, to warn you, and to ask you why your best days, and gayest hours, should not be employed with activity in the services of your God? What decency and honour are given to religion by its fair and youngest friends, when their behaviour is influenced by its desirable precepts, and their whole conduct *reputable*? With what peculiar praise doth the word of God recommend the character of youthful piety? How is the young king, Josiah, celebrated in the sacred records? *While he was yet young, he began to seek after the God of DAVID his Father* *. How is Timothy commended, who knew the Holy Scriptures from his very childhood †? There are some young in years to whom the apostle John might address himself, with the same pleasure as he did the christian converts whom he called *young men, strong in grace, who had the love of God abiding in them, and who had overcome the wicked one*.

Let us speak a word to those who have rich endowments of mind. In you we behold an active genius, solid reason, deep penetration, and good sense, we cannot but love you as the possessors of them, even when we are obliged to say, in some cases, it is a pity that so much worth as you have should be abused to ridicule religion, to honour foul iniquity, by making it plausible; and that it should be

* 2 Chron. xxxiv. 3.

† 2 Tim. iii. 15.

prostituted, on many subjects, to the arts of lewdness, in order to clothe the shame of nature in the charms of language. Or if those things, in which you excel, be not debased for purposes so exceedingly vile, is it not a pity that your talents should all be employed in trifling amusement, and matters of no importance to your best interest? Might not some of your moments be laid out infinitely better in promoting the truest happiness of mankind, by shewing your acquaintance some engaging examples of love to God, and zeal for his unfading glory? Are you the persons whose happy talents give a relish to the common comforts of life? Do you diffuse joy and pleasure through all the company you are in, and enliven the dullest hours? Upon what principle do you make yourselves so entertaining? Is it possible for you to be much admired when there is no lasting happiness to be derived from you, or any of your conversation? Will the gaiety of your temper bear a serious reflection when you are alone? Are your talents, to please the multitude, perfectly innocent? I ask you these questions, because *there is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death. Even in laughter the heart is sorrowful, and the end of that mirth is heaviness* *. It gives an ingenuous mind pain to consider, that persons of your accomplishments should have no comfortable hopes in a serious view of death.

* Prov. xiv. 12, 13.

What will divert you when your gayety is over, when your days are finished, and when you have done with this world?

I pity the man who hath strong reason and great sagacity; who hath traced nature to her most secret recesses; who hath sounded the depths of the seas, and measured the expanse of the heavens, but who hath never *looked* into the *depth* of his own *misery* and *guilt*, as he is a son of *Adam*: nor is he acquainted with the way of ascending to heaven by the cross of the Son of God. Reason is a faculty of supreme excellence among the gifts of nature; and it shocks the feelings of good men to think that it should ever be engaged in opposition to divine grace. How *strangely* great and wretched are the *men of reason*, who, with ill-applied talents, strain the nerves of their souls to overturn the doctrine of *Christ*! who *labour*, with all their intellectual powers, to shake the foundations of the gospel, to diminish the *authority* of the *scriptures*, and to *unsettle* the *hope* of feeble *CHRISTIANS*!

There are those who employ the best faculties of their souls in pursuing the interests of this life; they are wise in contrivance to gratify their appetites, to fill their coffers, and to heap up to themselves wealth and honour; and wise to secure all these to their posterity. They call their lands by their names, and perpetuate their memory to the latest generations, but make no provision for their

souls. They are wise to set in order their houses in the day of their health, and all things are prepared for their dying hour *but the concerns of their own eternity; these* are delayed from day to day, and left at the utmost hazard; still they think the next month, or the next year, is time enough to prepare for heaven; when, perhaps, a summons is sent suddenly from on high, saying, Thou fool, this night is thy soul required of thee*. O, ye fatally careless souls, what confusion and fear, what hurry and distress of spirit will seize you in that hour? You have laid out all your wisdom upon the little businesses of this life, and trifled with affairs of everlasting importance; you must go down into the chambers of death in surprize and anguish; you must leave all the fruits of your wisdom behind you, and your characters will be tarnished with eternal folly.

I pity those who are blessed with a good memory, but who do not improve it for the best purposes. I would plead with you to day for the sake of your souls. The memory is a noble repository of the mind; it is made to receive *sacred*, as well as *moral truths*; to be stored with ideas of God and of his grace, with the glories of Christ and heaven: it is given us to furnish and supply the heart and tongue upon all occasions, for worship, for conversation, and for holy joy. What a pity it is that so wondrous

* Luke xii. 20.

capacity should be crowded with vile images, with wanton scenes, with profane jests, and idle stories! If not with these, perhaps it is filled with heaps of gold, and silver, and merchandize; with lands and houses, ships and insurances; or, perhaps, it is inscribed with stocks, annuities, and purchases, and turned into a mere book of accounts, a trading shop, or an everlasting exchange. Night and day the buyers and sellers are passing through this temple which should be consecrated to God; and there is no room left for thoughts of heaven in it. Shall these busy multitudes of cares and vanities for ever fill up so large a part of the soul? Shall impertinencies be for ever thrust into this treasury, such as will stand you in no stead when you are dismissed from the body? All *these* will vanish at once in that hour, and shall leave your spirits poor and helpless; or if they go ideally with you to the world of spirits, they will be only as so much fuel gathered for your future burning.

Think a little of yourselves ye possessors of these rich endowments of the mind; when you have been honoured here on earth, can you bear to be doomed to eternal shame and punishment in hell? Shall this wit, and this reason, be there employed to express your hatred against God, and to forge perpetual blasphemies against the Majesty of Heaven*? Are you willing to be joined to the society of devils, and be engaged in their abominable works? Shall this sprightly

* Rev. xvi. 10, 11.

fancy, this subtle reason, this retentive memory serve for no purpose, but to aggravate your guilt and your damnation? Shall these fine talents sharpen your misery, and give edge to the keenest reflections of your conscience? Conscience, that inward sting of the mind? Conscience, that immortal tormentor? Yet this must be the certain portion of those who spend their life, and lie down in death, with these talents of the mind unsanctified for the services of God.

Though I have been, perhaps, tedious in this part of my discourse, yet, before I finish it, I must address myself to those who have been born with a sweet disposition, and who seem to be cast in a softer mould than the rest of mankind. I love and pity those of my acquaintance who are blessed with so happy a temper, who have tenderness and good-will in their very make; and I mourn when I think that any of these should perish for ever. You are favourites wherever you go, and beloved by all persons who enjoy the pleasure of your company. Do you not long to be in favour with God too? You seem made for the comfort of mankind; but shall this be all your portion? Good humour is the composition of your nature, and the *law of kindness is on your lips; when the ear hears you then it blesses you; and when the eye sees you it gives witness to you.* But is this enough for you to depend upon for eternal life? Perhaps you have received a part of the valuable qualities of
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that good man Job. You have delivered the poor who cry, and the fatherless who had none to help him; you have caused the widow's heart to sing for joy; and the blessing of him who was ready to perish has come often upon you*. There is so much natural goodness in your constitution that it leads you, by a sweet inclination, to many acts of charity. But your goodness in this respect is not *saving grace*; nor can a thousand good things atone for those latent vices which, in some form or other, you cherish in your hearts; partial goodness will not secure you. You who delight, while you are upon earth, in some of the works of peace, what will you do in the company of malicious spirits who love no peace; what will you do when your tender dispositions shall be hourly ruffled by the uproar and confusion of those dark regions? and instead of the society of God and blessed spirits, ye shall be eternally vexed with the perverse tempers of your fellow sinners, the sons of darkness. O that I could speak in soft and melting language, or in the language of effectual terror, that I might, by any means, awaken your souls to jealousy and timely fear! That so many natural excellencies as God hath distributed amongst you might not be wasted in impiety, abused to dishonour, and made to aggravate your everlasting misery.

2dly. My next exhortation shall be addressed to those youths who have been brought up in

* Job xxxix. 11, 12, 13.

all the ways of civility, and who have acquired a courteous and becoming manner. There is something lovely in you which commands the love, even of the rude and uncivil. It so nearly resembles the sweetness of a natural good temper that it often passes in company for it, and it attains many valuable purposes in society.

But where both a natural good temper and good breeding are happily joined, how shining is that character, and universally beloved? We are pleased and charmed with your conversation, whose manners are polished, and whose language is refined from rudeness or vulgarity of speech. You know how to speak civil things, without flattery, upon all occasions; to instruct without assuming a superior air; and to reprove without a frown or a forbidding countenance. You have learned when to speak, and when to be silent, and to perform every thing with proper graces; and can you be content, with all this good breeding, to be thrust down into hell? Is it not a pity that you should be taught how to pay all your honours to men when you are deficient in your respect to God? Have you never read these duties in connexion, "Honour all men, love the brotherhood, fear God, and honour the king *?" Why will you divide what God hath joined? Why will you give every one his due but your Maker? How ill does it become you to treat mankind with

* 1 Pet. ii. 17.

ceremony, decency and respect, when you leave your God neglected?

How undesirable a sight is it to behold a well-accomplished gentleman, yet a vile sinner; a pretty and obliging youth, but obstinately regardless of religion! How inconceivably lamentable will it be in the last day, to see such as these, the gay, the affable, the fair-spoken, and the well-bred sinner, in the uttermost agonies of terrifying despair, mourning a lost God, a lost soul, and a lost heaven!

Let me speak once more, and let me try to provoke you to jealousy. Shall the rough and clownish part of mankind press forward into the kingdom of heaven before you? Will you patiently see some of the unbred and unpolished sit at the right hand of the great Judge, and you with shame and confusion divided to the left? How will you support yourselves when you will see the honours of heaven bestowed upon those whom you looked upon while in this world as below you in every respect, except in goodness and sincere piety? Can you imagine that the holy tribunal of the most High will be bribed with fair speeches, or that anything will be accepted there which has not the sanction of a truly religious heart? Suffer me to exhort you therefore to seek an *inward reformation of soul*. Receive my advice, you who are not used to deny any thing to your friends; you who love to oblige those

who ask any reasonable favour of you ; let me, oh ! let me not ask this request of you in vain.

3dly. *Those who have enjoyed the blessings of a religious parentage, and a pious education ;* who have been bred up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, in the knowledge and practice of good morals, and in all the rites of religion. We love you for the sake of your parents ; you are the living images of our dearest friends. With pleasure we have repeated those religious questions in public, which your parents taught you privately, and you have many times answered them to our satisfaction : but we pity you from our very souls, when we see you break those bars of education, and make your way to ruin ; or when, at best, you only turn round in a circle of forms, without feeling the in-wrought pleasure of service to God. Did your parents live as you do ? Have you had bright examples of holiness before you, without any benefit ? Have they prayed for you daily, and daily exhorted you to take care of your souls ; and are you resolved that their counsels, their prayers, and their tears of concern for you shall be all in vain ? Is this the return you make for all their care and compassion ? Have they not frequently told you, that they could have no greater joy than to see their children walking in the truth of real piety ? and will you cruelly disappoint their pleasures, and bring down their grey hair with sorrow to the grave ? Perhaps some of you have already parted with your

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parents,

parents, and their spirits are at rest, and hath neither their life nor their death been of use to you? What anguish and sad vexation will seize you when ye shall reflect how great your privileges were, and how neare once were brought to heaven; and yet how you quitted your interest and your hope there for the trifles of this life, for the gratification of your lust, or for foolish vanity? What will you say, when ye shall see *many coming from the East and from the West, from wicked families, and from the ends of the earth, to sit down with your fathers in the kingdom of heaven, while you (in some sense) the children of the kingdom, are cast out into outer darkness; I need scarcely to tell you that there, in that state, shall be weeping, and wailing, and gnashing of teeth.* I have presumed so far to address you with freedom, if by any means I might provoke to emulation you who are of the flesh of Israel, of the kindred of Christians, and might save some of you.

4thly. Those who have been (to some degree) industrious in seeking after eternal life, and are still enquiring after it, be not satisfied with enquiring alone, or with *mere virtue*, or in professing a *regard* for Christianity; all these are good, but *aspire to exceed them.* Let the practice of virtue and Christianity be dear to you, while you look with *sacred* pleasure and holy joy, to the atonement of Jesus Christ, who, by virtue of what he hath done, hath made your peace with God.

Believe me, young people, it is not an easy thing to be saved; an *indifferent* attachment to all which is good, will never effect your happiness, nor secure your souls from perdition. You have wrestled with some sinful propensities, and have, in some instances, resisted them; and shall they gain upon you, so as that you may be endangered by them again? Press on through the field of battle, fulfil the warfare, and receive the crown*. Greater, infinitely greater is he who is for you, in the accomplishment of every good, than he who is against you†.

5thly. Those who are rich in the world, and who are possessed of many good qualities. I am well assured that there are many persons of this character. You are wealthy, but condescending, like the young man mentioned in our text: you are frequently uncovered in the presence of your ministers, and you shew them honours and civilities, which they pretend not to be equal too, and in more profusion than they desire. You come to them occasionally, to ask this question, *What shall we do to inherit eternal life?* And they tell you, upon the authority of the word of God, that you should not *love the world, nor the things of the world, for where the love of the world is, the love of the Father is not. If riches increase, set not your hearts upon them. Mortify your affections which are upon the earth, and deny yourselves; take up your cross and follow Jesus Christ.*

* 2 Cor. ix. 4, 5, 6. 1 Tim. i. 18. † 1 John iv. 4.

Be his disciples *without reserve*. Shew your faith in his doctrines, and your love to his precepts, by a universal holiness of your lives. While we propose those paths of eternal happiness to you, shall it be said of you, they went away sorrowful, having great possessions?

Your condescending and affable deportment receives addition, even from a richness of dress, which becomes you; and the higher your circumstances are, the more graceful is your humble attention to those ministers who preach to you, and your readiness to hear what they say is the more commendable. But will you be hearers only? Will you never *reduce what you hear* into practice? The time is coming, and the hour makes *haste* upon you, when you shall look into that world of spirits, where all the honours and distinctions of this shall be known no more. Ye shall be stripped of those vanities which ye love above God and heaven. Think how mean and despicable a figure your souls will make amongst fallen angels, and the spirits of miserable men, if the love of this world, and the neglect of God, should bring you into that shocking company. However splendid, or great, your figure may be on earth, you will make but a poor and wretched figure in that world, if you should be found there without the riches of grace and undissembled religion in your hearts. It would be a sad inscription on your tomb, were it written upon it with truth, *This rich man died, and he lift up his eyes in hell.*

But, beloved brethren, we would hope better things of you, even things which accompany salvation.

II. Those who are reformed, in some measure, so as not to love the world immoderately, but who are culpable for an *unamiable temper*. There is nothing in our text which points directly to your case, but the amiableness of this young man, who would still retain one fatal vice, brings you to my mind, who are so well inclined, in many respects, perhaps in all respects, but in that shocking temper which you indulge, and which seems opposed to the good temper of this young man. You have a sort of love for God; you regard Jesus Christ as the great Mediator of peace between man and the Divine Being. You take pleasure in the worship and forms of religion, and you have a sort of piety in your heart which constrains you, *for the sake of God*, to do many good things; but you have a temper which betrays a very bad quality in your hearts. By your behaviour you bring into the world an ill report of Christianity. You profess a strong attachment to the gospel, but you have very little which is evangelical in your spirit. You would have people believe that you belong to heaven, when you do not restrain an intolerably provoking temper, which strongly resembles the violence of hell. You expect to be the companions of happy spirits in the other world, when you are very untoward, very trouble-

some, very bad, and very unfit members of society in this world. You say, that you love God when you are morose, rude, and disgusting in your behaviour to men who are *universally the offspring of God*. If you hold an office in the church, you cannot treat your *fellow Christians* with civility, and your own house suffers and is frequently terrified by you; a small and very trifling accident shall at any time break the peace of your family, and make all, who are under your roof, *half distracted*. People may charitably say, that you have goodness, some where or other in your heart, but they are obliged to say too, that they cannot tell where it shines, for they see very little of the light of it. Do you think that you adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things? Do you obey the gospel, which says, *Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil-speaking, be put away from you, with all malice**? Do not the scriptures enjoin all Christians to speak evil of no man; to be no brawlers; to be gentle, and to shew meekness to all; to prefer one another in honour; to bless, and curse not; to rejoice with those who rejoice; to weep with those who weep; to condescend to men of *low estate*; and, *if possible*, to live peaceably with *all men*? Can any man with reason and truth say, that he loves God, and the Saviour, and the sacred writings, who is regardless of those precepts, and who violates them many

* Eph. iv. 31.

times every day? Is it possible for any man to be a sincere servant of God, and in the right way to heaven, who neglects what Revelation says to him in these words, *If any man among you seem to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, this man's religion is vain* *. Will the sublime practices of faith, and adoration, and burning zeal for inexplicable opinions, atone for inattention to such a text as this, which lies open before our eyes, and which we have now referred to. We know that an immoderate love of wealth (which is forbidden of God) condemned the young man, who, for many good qualities, Jesus loved. Have we not reason enough to believe that those who have many good qualities, and some *tolerable knowledge of religion*, are equally condemnable, and in as much danger of a fatal disappointment, when they allow themselves in committing what God has forbidden, as much as he has forbidden an immoderate love of worldly possessions? The late, but worthy Dr. Doddridge, lamented, in his improvement of the 13th chapter of the first epistle to the Corinthians, the state of those men who built much of their hopes of heaven on breathing what was indeed the temper of hell. How many, saith he, who stile themselves *Christians*, can *endure no provocations*, can *cover no faults* of their brethren, can *keep themselves within no bounds*, can believe nothing to their advantage, against

* James i. 26.

whom, on *party principles*, they have entertained prejudices? They vaunt themselves; they are puffed up with the conceit of their own wisdom; they behave unseemly; they seek *their own reputation and profit*; they believe the worst they can hear of others, and *suspect* more than they hear. They *envy* those whose endowments and stations are superior to their own; and instead of labouring themselves to excel, they affect, by calumny and slander, to bring down their brethren to their own level; or, *if possible*, below it. Speaking of such people, How many (saith the same good man) are now, alas, gone down to final destruction, and feel an hell of malignant passions within, which will be matter of everlasting torment to themselves and all their wretched companions*. But if there were nothing wicked or displeasing to God, or at all dangerous to men in an ill temper, how very unbecoming and even ridiculous is it in a person, who professes himself a Christian, to indulge himself in it. We seldom think much of the Christianity of a man or woman who is intoxicated continually with strong liquor; and why should we think much of the Christianity of those who are continually intoxicated with anger or rage? The appearance of the one is not more seemly than that of the other, except that sometimes, a man who is drunk with liquor is, in some vague sense, good-humoured; but a man who is drunk, or mad with rage, never can be so.

* Sermon on Phil. ii. 1, 2.

Some people, with a greater regard for *speculative* than *practical* religion, have said *wittily*, and in order to *palliate* this *vice* (as it should seem) amongst the coarse and lowest classes of mankind, that "Grace sometimes grows upon a crab-tree."—Unfortunate saying, designed to veil an easy besetting sin, and to make wickedness tolerable. Not so, said the *apostle James*, when he *reasoned* about the *the same matter*, he argued thus; *Doth a fountain send forth at the same place sweet water and bitter? Can the fig-tree, my brethren, bear olive-berries? either a vine, figs? so can no fountain yield both salt water and fresh**. The *natural* behaviour which arises from Christianity is distinguished by decency and loveliness; and it produces in mankind, not only the things which are true, honest and pure, but the things which are *lovely*, and of *good report*. We put the religion which our Saviour revealed into a disguise, and make it look unlike itself, if we pretend to practice it when our temper is sour, fretful, and rough; and we are well assured, that *the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God*, but hath an invariable tendency to *frustrate it*. The genuine Christian hath necessarily a mild heart, a pleasing softness of manner, and an amiableness of disposition which all good people must love. If he has had no education, and is ignorant of genteel life, yet having received from the principles of religion the true spirit of Christianity, his manners, like the *unpolished* part of rough

* James iii. 11, 12.

silver or gold, are pleasing, admired, and in some cases more simply fine than the part which has received a most shining polish. Let those pretenders, therefore, to piety and religion, who are yet austere in their manners, and who, through their angry passions, are grieving to their families, and a trouble to society, be ashamed of that discredit (not to say more) which they bring upon Christianity, and of that ridiculous deceit which they impose upon themselves, while they are expecting the rewards of heaven, with all that churlishness in their behaviour which is ominous of their fatal disappointment in the great Judgment day.

III. Those who have every good quality.

You have encouraging examples before you to preserve the character which, through the goodness and grace of God, you have acquired. Behold your Saviour, who, from a life of universal holiness, and unequalled piety, hath encouraged you, exactly as you are capable of following him, to walk in the same way, to final bliss and everlasting happiness: by your profession you are invited to look unto Jesus, the Author and Finisher of your faith, who for the joy which was set before him, endured the cross, *despising the shame*, and is set down at the right hand of God. If you meet with any thing which depresses your spirits in the path of virtue and religion, consider him who endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, left

lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds. Ye have not resisted, nor are you at all likely in these days to resist, unto blood, striving against sin. The yoke which holds you to your duty is easy, and the burden which puts your religious virtues to a trial, at any time, must be (compared with that of your Saviour) *light*. You see, that from his nativity, as he grew in stature, he grew in wisdom and in favour with God and men; and had not his divine commission made it necessary for him to oppose the vices of the world, and the errors of a wicked age, he would undoubtedly have retained the approbation of all who saw him, in mildness of deportment, and in all the graces of conversation. He was, indeed, the chiefest of ten thousands, and altogether lovely: copy his example more and more my brethren, and rejoice in the future rewards of your exemplary religion. Take a view frequently of the lives of those, whom, as Christians, you are called to imitate: I shall name John only, who, for the peculiar esteem which our Saviour shewed him, was called the *beloved disciple*. View the temper of his soul in his epistles: What a spirit of love breathes in every line! What compassion and tenderness did he express to those whom he regarded as babes in Christ! What condescending affection did he express for those Christians whom he styled young men! And what deference to the fathers, those good old men, who were his equals in age! This disciple leaned on the Saviour's bosom at the holy supper, and was indulged in the

the utmost freedom of conversation with his Lord. Happiest of Christians are they who most nearly, *in all their behaviour*, resemble this apostle.

Here I shall conclude this subject, praying that it may, with some success, promote the genuine spirit of Christianity. May those, who are but partially good, examine themselves with diligence, and let them be emulous to acquire the desirable character of exemplary Christians in every respect. May no one censoriously apply what I have said to others, while he evades the benefit of applying it to himself. I rejoice in believing that a *merciful distinction* will be made between what is weak and wilfully criminal in every man, by the great Judge of all. He who searcheth the heart knows how to pity the sincere who *laments and forsakes* his *wickedness*, of whatever kind, while he prepares judgment for the presumptuous. He never mistakes the difference between a momentary misconduct by surprize, and a constant struggle against the warnings of a *feeling*, but a *hurt conscience*. The day hastens apace which shall close the scene of all our admonitions to the externally *amiable*, who have some *latent vices*; the *unamiable*, who have some *latent goodness*; and to all mankind, we humbly intreat, therefore, when our labours of every kind, for their benefit, are past, that our endeavours to do them service may be approved of by our God. To whom, through the great Mediator, be all honour and glory ascribed. Amen.

H Y M N.

I.

B E S E T with Snares on every Hand,
In Life's uncertain Path I stand :
Saviour divine diffuse thy Light,
To guide my doubtful footsteps right.

II.

Engage this roving treacherous Heart,
Great God, to chuse *the better Part* ;
To scorn the 'Trifles of a Day,
For Joys, which *none can take away*.

III.

Then let the wildest Storms arise,
Let Tempests mingle Earth and Skies ;
No fatal Shipwreck shall I fear,
But all my Treasure with me bear.

IV.

If thou, my Jesus, still art nigh,
Cheerful I live, and cheerful die ;
Secure, when mortal Comforts flee,
To find *ten thousand Worlds in thee*.

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F I N I S.